

Petaluma Historical Library and Museum
Oral History Project
Narrative Interview: Maxine Kortum Durnev, 1989
Petaluma, California
Interviewed by: Maxine Kortum Durnev
Date: 1989
Betty Larsen Fraser

as told to Maxine Kortum Durnev, 1989

My parents, Hans Larsen and Anna Lund, came from the Isle of Fyn, Denmark. My father was of a poor family. He probably only went to the sixth grade. As a boy of 11 he was "sent out" to work and live on another farm. He came in 1903 to Nevada, when he was 18. If he had stayed in Denmark he would have to go into the Danish military. In Reno he was a harness maker. My father was a spunky little guy, and told us stories of life up in Nevada. In 1906 he was in Daly City, working as a hod carrier, after the earthquake.

My mother and father had known each other in Denmark. She came to join him in 1911, and they were married. She was 29.

They came to Petaluma, on the Steamer Gold, to become partners with George Knudsen, my father's friend, who had a chicken ranch on Marshall Avenue, the place my brother has now. Later my Dad bought out Knudsen.

I don't remember vacations. Picnics, yes, but we had to get home to feed the chickens and milk the cow, before dark. Sometimes the men would leave the picnic to go home to perform those chores, then return, if it were a long summer evening.

You saw a lot of cut down sedans in those days. When my father bought a new passenger car, he converted the old sedan into a little truck, by cutting out the back seat and building a platform to haul eggs and feed. He never bought a pickup, per se.

We walked home from Cinnabar School, a gang of kids...Virginia Hansen, Gretchen Stonitsch, Harold Jensen, Ruth Zipin, Betty Barlas.... When I got home I changed my clothes and ran out to spend as much time working in my garden as I could before I had to go gather and pack eggs.

I had three houses to gather eggs from, one of which, the "corner house", we called it, was next to the neighbor's pig farm. Pigs draw rats and my father would go down at night to shoot them. It was that house I was terrified to go in, to gather the eggs. I breathed a sigh of relief each day when I finished there.

I remember how my brother and I would show off by swinging the buckets round and round, centrifugal force keeping the eggs from falling out. They couldn't have been full buckets.

Before packing the eggs, we separated the clean from the dirty, and sandpapered the dirty. We learned to pick up four eggs at a time in each hand, for the packing.

If we didn't finish the cleaning and packing before dinner, we went on to our homework after dinner, and Dad finished the work with the eggs.

PETALUMA HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Oral History Program

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PLACE 410 Sunset Ave

Hickory, Ca

DATE 6/25/1992

Betty Traver
(Interviewee)

Betty Traver
(for the Petaluma Historical Museum)

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Narrator Personal Information Questionnaire

Name Tresser Betty L. Larson
Last First Middle (Maiden)

Address 910 Sunset Dr.
Healdsburg, Ca 95448

Marital status: Married ☒ Single ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐

Birthdate 10/21/1920 Birthplace Petaluma, Ca

Length of residence in Petaluma (or Sonoma County) 26 yrs in Sonoma Co.

Education: Elementary school Pinnaker, Petaluma

Secondary school Petaluma Jr. & Sr. High Grad 1938

College U.C., Berkeley (1 year) Grad ☐

Other Business, San Francisco

Occupation(s) or former occupations(s) Standard Oil, P.F., office

Becht Shipyard, Napa, office

Travis Street Red Wing Shoe Store, co-owner

Travels Europe (England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark)

U.S., Canada

Organizations, clubs G.I.R., Mothers Club

Other special interests Reading, gardening, travel

Additional comments My biggest interest outside of

family, was our business shared with my

husband, Travis Store in Healdsburg for 30 years,

& now the Red Wing Shoe Store in Santa Rosa for
the last 17 years.

THANK YOU!

PETALUMA HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Oral History Program
Family History Questionnaire

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Deceased? Date</u>
<u>Parents*</u>	<u>Hans Larsen</u>	<u>12/6/1884</u>	<u>Danmark</u>	<u>1975</u>
	<u>Anna Lund Larsen</u>	<u>5/29/1882</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>19</u>

<u>Brothers & Sisters</u>	<u>Ellen Longberg</u>	<u>4/25/1912</u>	<u>Calif City, Ca.</u>
	<u>Edith Glad</u>	<u>3/4/1914</u>	<u>"</u>
	<u>Robert Larsen</u>	<u>10/18/1927</u>	<u>Petaluma, Ca</u>

<u>Grand-parents*</u>	<u>?</u>

<u>Spouse</u>	<u>Clifford Tracer</u>	<u>3/20/1919</u>	<u>Stockton, Ca</u>
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<u>Children</u>	<u>Mark Tracer</u>	<u>2/13/1947</u>	<u>Petaluma, Ca</u>
	<u>Scott Tracer</u>	<u>2/20/1950</u>	<u>"</u>

<u>Grandchildren</u>	<u>Matthew Tracer</u>	<u>1/6/1974</u>	<u>Santa Rosa Ca</u>
	<u>Angy Tracer</u>	<u>7/20/1975</u>	<u>"</u>

*Please include maiden name of mother and grandmothers.

THANK YOU!